

unless extended pursuant to §103.8(a). The purpose of the letter of denial is to inform the appellant of the reason for the denial and the right to judicial review of that denial under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4)(B). If the FOIA Appeals Officer is unable to act on an appeal within the 20-day period (or any extension thereof pursuant to §103.8(a)), the FOIA Appeals Officer shall send written notice of that fact to the appellant. In those circumstances, an appellant is entitled to commence an action in a district court as provided in §103.9 despite any continuation in the processing of an appeal. However, the appellant may also be invited, in the alternative, to agree to a voluntary extension of time in which to decide the appeal. A voluntary extension does not waive the right of the appellant to ultimately commence an action in a United States district court on the appellant's request.

[T.D. 81-168, 46 FR 32565, June 24, 1981, as amended by T.D. 99-27, 64 FR 13675, Mar. 22, 1999]

§ 103.8 Time extensions.

(a) *Ten-day extension.* In unusual circumstances, the Customs officer who is responsible for deciding an initial request or an appeal may extend the time limitations set in §§103.6 and 103.7 after written notice to the requester or appellant. This notice must state the reason for the extension and the date on which the determination is expected to be dispatched. Any extension or extensions of time are limited to a cumulative total of not more than 10 additional working days. (For example, if an extension pursuant to this paragraph is invoked in connection with an initial determination, any unused days of the extension period may be invoked in connection with the determination on administrative appeal by written notice from the FOIA Appeals Officer, who is to make the appellate determination. If no extension is sought for the initial determination, an extension of 10 days may be added to the ordinary 20-day period for appellant review.) Generally, extensions will be invoked only to the extent reasonably necessary to properly respond to a request. As used in this paragraph, "unusual

circumstances" means at least one of the following:

(1) The need to search for and collect the requested records from field facilities or other establishments in buildings other than the building in which the office of the Customs officer to whom the request is made is located.

(2) The need to search for, collect, and appropriately examine a voluminous amount of separate and distinct records which are demanded in a single request.

(3) The need for consultation, which shall be conducted with all practicable speed, with another Department or agency having a substantial interest in the determination of the request, among two or more constituent units within the Department of the Treasury, or within offices of the United States Customs Service (other than the legal staff or Office of Congressional & Public Affairs) having substantial subject-matter interest therein. Consultations with personnel of the Department of Justice concerned with requests for records under the Freedom of Information Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. 552), do not constitute a basis for an extension under this paragraph.

(b) *Extension by judicial review.* If the United States Customs Service fails to comply with the time limitations specified in §§103.6 and 103.7 and the requester commences an action under §103.9, the court in which the suit was initiated may retain jurisdiction and allow the United States Customs Service additional time to review its records, if the Customs Service shows the existence of exceptional circumstances and the exercise of due diligence in responding to the request.

[T.D. 81-168, 46 FR 32565, June 24, 1981; 46 FR 35084, July 7, 1981, as amended by T.D. 91-77, 56 FR 46114, Sept. 10, 1991]

§ 103.9 Judicial review.

(a) *Failure to comply with time limitations.* If the United States Customs Service fails to comply with the time limitations specified in §§103.6, 103.7 or §103.8, a requester is considered to have exhausted the administrative remedies with respect to the request.

(b) *Procedure of initiating judicial review.* If a request for records is denied upon appeal pursuant to §103.7, or if no

determination is made within the 10-day or 20-day periods specified in §§ 103.6 and 103.7, respectively, together with an extension pursuant to § 103.8(a) or by agreement of the requester, the requester may commence an action under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4)(B) in a United States district court in the district (1) in which the requester resides, (2) in which the requester's principal place of business is located, (3) in which the records are situated, or (4) in the District of Columbia. Service of process in that action is governed by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (28 U.S.C. App.) applicable to actions against an agency of the United States. The Chief Counsel, United States Customs Service, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20229 is the officer designated to receive any service of process.

(c) *Proceeding against officer or employee.* Under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4)(F), the Special Counsel, Merit Systems Protection Board, has authority, upon the issuance of a written finding by a court that the Customs officer or employee who was primarily responsible for withholding a record may have acted arbitrarily or capriciously, to initiate a proceeding to determine whether disciplinary action is warranted against that officer or employee. The Special Counsel, after investigation and consideration of the evidence submitted, submits its findings and recommendations to the Commissioner of Customs and the Secretary of the Treasury. The Special Counsel also sends copies of the findings and recommendations to the officer or employee or the representative of that officer or employee.

[T.D. 81-168, 46 FR 32565, June 24, 1981, as amended by T.D. 99-27, 64 FR 13675, Mar. 22, 1999]

§ 103.10 Fees for services.

(a) *In general.* (1) The fees prescribed in this section are for search and duplication and under no circumstances is there a fee for determining whether an exemption can or should be asserted, for deleting exempt matter being withheld from records to be furnished, or for monitoring a requester's inspection of records made available in this manner.

(2) Customs publications which are available for sale through the Government Printing Office are on the shelves of the reading rooms and similar public inspection facilities, but those publications are not available for sale at those facilities. Those publications may be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. However, pages from those publications may be copied at the public inspection facilities in accordance with the schedule of fees set forth in paragraph (g) of this section.

(b) *When charged.* Unless charges are inapplicable, or are waived or reduced in accordance with paragraph (c) or (d) of this section, fees are charged in accordance with the schedule contained in paragraph (g) of this section for services rendered in responding to requests for records.

(c) *Services performed without charge—*(1) *Certain classes of records.* The Commissioner of Customs or any of the Commissioner's designees may determine, under the rulemaking procedures of 5 U.S.C. 553, which classes or records under their control may be provided to the public without charge, or at a reduced charge.

(2) *Records provided to government units.* Normally, in accordance with paragraph (d)(2)(ii) of this section, no charge is made for providing records to Federal, State, or foreign governments, international governmental organizations, or local governmental agencies or offices.

(d) *Waiver or reduction of fees—*(1) *Records unavailable or exempt.* Fees may be waived or reduced at the discretion of the Customs officer who determines the availability of records, if the record is not found or is exempt from disclosure.

(2) *Request for waiver or reduction of fees.* Fees may be waived or reduced on a case by case basis in accordance with this paragraph by the Customs officer who determines whether to release the record. A request for a waiver or reduction of fees must be in writing. The appropriate Customs officer shall waive or reduce a fee if the officer determines either that:

(i) The records are being requested by, or on behalf of, an individual who